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Note verbale dated 25 April 2003 from the Permanent Mission of Zambia to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of Zambia to the United Nations Office at Geneva and to other international organizations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 1166 (XII) of 26 November 1957 concerning the creation of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, as well as subsequent Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions on the enlargement of the Executive Committee, has the honour to bring to his attention the request of the Government of Zambia to become a member of the Executive Committee, election to which is on the basis of the largest geographical representation of countries that have demonstrated their interest in a solution to the refugee problem.

Zambia supports fully the promotion of and respect for fundamental human rights. On that basis, the Zambian Government has maintained a positive, open-door policy towards refugees and has thus for a long time admitted and hosted refugees seeking protection and fleeing threats to their life and freedom. The Zambian Government's commitment to assisting refugees has been further demonstrated by its ratification of the 1969 Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, as well as the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol.

As a country acting as host to refugees from various countries, Zambia has demonstrated keen interest in, and devotion to, efforts aimed at seeking durable solutions to the problem of refugees. Currently, Zambia, with the support of the donor community, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and others, is in the process of implementing the Zambia initiative, a community-based area development programme in refugee hosting areas, which is intended to benefit both the refugees and the host communities.

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Consequently, the Zambian Government would be grateful if the Secretary-General of the United Nations could take the required measures to enlarge the membership of the Executive Committee. In seeking membership in the Executive Committee, the Zambian Government indicates its readiness to make effective and constructive contributions in line with its well-known tradition in this matter and its commitment to the noble cause and mandate of UNHCR.